



To Make You Smile by everybreatheverymove

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Summary: They were lying in bed, comfortably gazing into each other's eyes with their foreheads pressed together. Everything is perfectly calm, silent... until she sneezes and he falls from the bed in surprise. "Wheeler," Hopper's voice rings through the doorway, "Keep your germs out of my house."

To Make You Smile

She's wearing an old sweater that he thinks Nancy must have picked out for her, because it's pink and fuzzy and just so girly. It's itchy against his skin, so he settles his hand on her back, on the small patch of bare skin above the top of her jeans.

There's nothing wrong with it, and he isn't crossing a line, he reckons. And she seems to appreciate his warmth as she snuggles closer, shifting one leg between both of his, and her hands are pressing against his own sweater-clad chest just as he goes to pull her closer.

She doesn't mind the way her curls fall into her face, he notes with a small smile. Her lips are drawn thin, eyes closed after heaving a loaded sigh.

Her mouth is pinker than usual, glossier and sparklier, and he wonders if maybe she's been using that watermelon flavoured chapstick again. (He liked the taste of that one much more than the cherry.)

El's breaths come out evenly, calmer than he first expects them to. But he thinks that maybe, for once, for the first time in a long time, she's at peace.

(It's not just an assumption – Hopper practically told him as much earlier.)

(He came over to help El practice her writing, but after an hour or so, she'd wanted to take a break and, fool for her that he was, Mike had been all too eager to lie down with her when she asked. He's pretty sure Hopper's already figured it out by now, too.)

Her left hand keeps pressed against his chest, just above where his heart beats beneath its cage. Mike would like to pretend he doesn't notice the way her breathing seems to match his own; the way the hand on his chest rises and falls with her every inhale, her every exhale.

Her eyes flicker open just as his own settle on her face, and she looks

up at him through her lashes, a pastel pink glow flushing her cheeks. (His own face is probably redder than hers, he'll admit.)

"Comfortable?"

El doesn't say anything, but she nods, and hums the melody to some song Jonathan played for her last week, and that's all the confirmation he needs. (That's all he'll ever need, he knows.) She moves her right palm to the side of his face, the tip of her index finger smoothing along his jawline.

He watches her in curiosity, almost confusion, and he hopes that her bedroom door doesn't spring open anytime soon. (Hopper standing there, grumpy and unimpressed, ready to throw Mike out on his ass – it's not even like he's the one touching her).

She hums soothingly as she continues to trace his face, her fingertips tapping, dancing along, poking at his chin and cheeks. Her index finger runs along his left cheekbone, drawing an invisible line down the prominent bone, her attention now solely on the splatter of freckles on his nose.

She grins, almost wickedly, briefly catching his eyes before dabbing her finger on each and every single freckle (no matter how small), her humming never ceasing to amuse and enthrall him.

He doesn't question her or ask her what she's doing. (He doesn't care, truthfully. She could poke him in the ribs, pull at his eyelashes if she really wanted to – he wouldn't complain).

She's curious, and she doesn't have freckles herself, and Mike understands.

As quiet as her humming is soft, her face is pensive, and her brown eyes scrunch up, focus in on his mouth when she reaches the bridge of his nose, taps it one last time.

(He would kiss her if Hopper wasn't right outside, if the risk of being interrupted wasn't so high. The door isn't even closed, just ajar.)

He would kiss her if she wasn't staring into his eyes with more intensity than he's ever seen, ever felt. He would kiss her if she wasn't

sniffing, her button nose crinkling as a chill breeze in through the cracked window that's yet to be fixed.

The girl shuffles closer on the bed then, until her forehead is pressed against his own, until her nose brushes against his and her breath is warm, hot, lingering over his lips.

She settles in there, body flush against his, legs tangling together, her elbows bent with her palms flat against his chest, two fingers messing with the top of his patterned sweater.

(She loves those, especially the Christmas ones. He's already made a pile to give to her when the holidays are over, when he's outgrown them.)

Her back arches, and she pushes into his front, and he has half a mind to hold her tighter, to keep her there. (That would be a little too much, though, he knows). So, he just keeps one hand on her back, and the other moves from beneath her pillow to lie between them.

Her curls fall when she nestles, nuzzles into his open hand, bringing her face closer. He messes with the strand, avoiding the temptation to tuck it behind her ear, to glide his hand through her locks and pull her closer.

Her sock clad feet slide up between them as she curls into a ball, and she rests her toes against his knees, stealing his natural warmth and lending him her own.

Save for the sounds of outside life, the room is mostly silent. His jeans rustle on her bed covers whenever he moves in the slightest, and their thick, winter sweaters scratch together when she grabs his hand, threading their fingers together below their chins, the friction causing a giggle on her part.

He thinks she wants to say something when her lips part and she blinks twice, three times, quick. But, instead, her nostrils flare and there's a buildup of cool air shooting out of her nose before either of them can react.

She sneezes, pressing a hand to her face a fraction of a second after the fact, but Mike's face lets her know it was too late. His own nose creases, and his eyes draw tight, peering down at his chin with a look she can't describe.

It's not like she snotted on him, but it's also not like she didn't. El's eyes practically bulge from her head then, and she wipes his face with the sleeve of her pink sweater before she can stop herself, before he can stop her.

"Sorry." She smiles, sheepishly, and Mike only chuckles.

"It's fine." The corners of his mouth draw up into a grin, and he nudges her nose against again, eskimo kissing her, "Just warn me next tim-"

Before he can finish his sentence, she's doing it again. Only this time, she sits up in such a hurry that Mike loses his balance on the open side of the bed, and when he falls backwards it's a mix of surprise and precaution.

He's pretty sure the back of his calf smacked into the wooden panel of her bedframe.

"Ow!"

He croaks, lay on his back on her bedroom floor, messy black hair decorating her old rug.

"Mike?" El reaches over for him then, her whole body suddenly up and alert.

Her small hands curl over the edge of the bed, fingertips pressing against the underside, anxiously tapping against the creaky wood. Her face creases in sympathy, eyes wide and lips parted just the slightest. "Are you okay?"

The boy makes to sit up, propping himself up on his elbows. He nods once, twice, glancing down at his nose with a little grunt, "Yeah."

Looking back up at her, he offers a small smile before tugging on the wrist that dangles over her bedside. Mike pulls her toward him,

watching as she moves onto her knees - more comfortable - and lies on her stomach across the soft mattress.

"Promise?" El brings her other arm forward, cupping the side of his face in her palm to turn his head from side to side, as though to inspect him. She nibbles her bottom lip, front teeth gnawing at the rosy flesh until he replies, reassures that he's fine, unhurt.

Mike laughs, just a little bit, "I am now." His left hand moves to cradle his right elbow anyway, and she can't pretend she didn't notice.

"That's gonna bruise." The girl informs him pointedly, and she grabs his arm before he can stop her, worry evident in her tone, "Let me see."

"It's fine," he offers, "I just bumped it." He says, wrapping long fingers around her dainty wrist. "El."

"Okay." She shifts back, bending at the knees until her back is straight. She's still leaning over the side of her bed though, and he's still a crumpled up mess on the floor. "Come back up here."

Instead of moving to join her again, Mike just swings his legs out from under him, moves to kneel in front of her.

He touches both of her wrists, thumb tracing over the cloth that adorns her left arm. He grabs the material (softly, despite his growing nerves), and tightens it in his fist as he draws her nearer, waiting for El to slide closer.

She hangs over the side of the bed, not paying much mind to the way the wood pushes into, might even bruise her tummy. "Mike?"

"Shh." He whispers, though it's more of a noise than actual words, and she smiles when his hands rise to cup her face between his palms, fingertips just past her hairline, just below her eye. His thumbs tug at the corners of her mouth, moving her lip up into a wider smile, and she can't help the giggle that escapes.

El ducks her gaze, staring at the old floorboards rather than his face. (It's easier to fight the blush).

"What are you doing?"

"Making you smile. You should always be smiling." He tells her, his touch lacking when he makes to retract his hands from her face.

She stops him without moving an inch, and he watches as her nose crinkles.

"Don't."

"I'm not doing anything." The girl defends herself, lifting her hands up innocently. Her smile's still there though, and he can't help the chuckle that lets loose when she still refuses to let his hold on her slip.

They sit in silence for a minute, only the sounds of laboured breath and birds outside breaking the quiet. Her eyes finally focus after a moment, settling on his lips.

But her nose starts dripping before she can control it, and his gaze falls to her upper lip then, all frown and knitted brows. She loosens her hold on him when he catches her eyes, telling. Mike plucks a tissue from out of the box beside the bed, hands it to her with another one spare.

"Thank you."

She wipes at her nose, crinkling the thin paper up into a ball and tossing it down next to her. He still has a spare, though and, before she can ask why, her body starts reacting and her nose starts tickling, and she's-

Another sneeze escapes before she can stop it, before she expects it to, and Mike is already holding out the other tissue with a knowing grin.

"Wheeler," Hopper's voice rings through the doorway, and it's only then that Mike remembers his presence, "Keep your germs out of my house."

"It wasn't me!"

"It's me." El speaks up, and she shakes her head to ward off another sneeze. Her nose is a little pink, a little twitchy. It's cute, Mike thinks. "I think I'm sick."

"Wheeler!"

It's accusing, and Mike's pretty sure the chief is going to come in and drag him out any second. He hopes to hell he doesn't, though. Not if she's sick. If she has a cold, or the flu, he wants to be around. He's had his shots and everything so he should be-

"Mike?"

He turns his head to face her again, barely having the time to take her in before she's pulling him forward by the collar of his shirt, tucked in beneath his sweater.

She practically drags him up on both knees, forcing him to press onto the side of the bed as she pushes her lips against his, abrupt and anything but soft.

Her arms circle around his neck, hands clasping at the base of his skull, fingertips just brushing past his dark mop of hair. She softens against him after a small moment, and the kiss doesn't last longer than ten seconds. Her lashes flutter against his cheeks when she leans her head against him, all warm and cute and-

"Bye."

Mike's eyes are scarcely open by the time she's pushing him backwards, hands leaving his body, and he feels all fuzzy.

"What?"

"Time to go, kid." Hopper's in the doorway, and he has Mike's coat hanging from his fingers. He tosses it onto the floor, his heavy build towering over the two teens. "Get your crap."

"Damn it."